

Church and in the world. Consequently the cry for reform continued to be heard, though the pope continued to enjoy the fruits of his victory without serious organised opposition. Here and there a zealous prelate, like Cardinal Cusanus in Germany, would try his hand at practical reform by means of provincial councils at Cologne, or Mainz, Salzburg, or Magdeburg. But abuse proved too strong for such isolated zeal and industry, and the growing immorality of clerical life, the scandalous traffic in benefices, the sordid worldliness of the clergy, the despairing outbursts of the popular preachers of the day, prove conclusively the incompetence of the hierarchy, in spite of reform movements, to eradicate abuses from the Church. The figure of a Savonarola reminds us that even in Italy the reformer within the Church was not unknown, but Savonarola's career ended, as we have seen, in tragic failure.

Within the religious fraternities, too, the aspiration after reform was very active throughout the century. It usually took a mystic form, as in the Brethren of the Common Life, and the Brotherhood of the Friends of God, in the Netherlands and Western Germany; but, though it militated against ecclesiastical abuses, it was not, as a rule, hostile to the Church. Occasionally its outcome was a crude religious pantheism, as in the case of the Brothers and Sisters of the Free Spirit, the Beghards, and other fraternities who outraged morality and parodied Christianity. From the Alps, too, where the Waldenses preserved the evangelical spirit in spite of the Inquisition, blew the breeze of reform, for the Waldenses had many adherents in Germany in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. But the existence of such fraternities or sects is important, rather as an indication of the reforming spirit than for any great effect in this direction. An Eckhardt, a Tauler, a Thomas a Kempis, a Wessel, a Pupper, were not the men to achieve what a Cusanus or a Savonarola failed to accomplish. The effective reformers were driven into a position of antagonism to the Church, and it was from without, not from within, that the reforming spirit found its most aggressive, its revolutionary expression. Wickliffe and Hus, not Cusanus, or Gerson, or Savonarola, were the prophets of the modern reformation. They stormed the very citadel of the traditional Church. They challenged its doctrines as well as its institu-